Council Agenda #_____ Meeting of May 25, 2010



Staff Report

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING DISTRICT BOUNDARY ON OLD COUNTY ROAD AND MASONIC WAY (RULE 20A UNDERGROUND UTILITIES CONVERSION)

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

The City Council is requested to consider amending the boundary of the utility undergrounding district on Old County Road and Masonic Way. The current district map includes properties that would require undergrounding outside Old County Road and Masonic Way.

Background

Old County Road is currently served by overhead power and communication utilities, as is one block of Masonic Way between Old County Road and Granada Way. Placing these utilities underground would improve the safety, convenience and aesthetics of these heavily traveled streets. On April 8, 2003, the City Council established the Old County Road and Masonic Way Underground Utility District, Resolution No. 9389.

Belmont's Ordinance and Rule 20A require the City to determine that utility undergrounding is in the general public interest before a district can be established. The determination can be made only after holding a public hearing and finding that one or more of the following conditions apply:

- 1. Undergrounding the utilities will eliminate an unusually heavy construction of overhead electric utilities;
- 2. The streets within the proposed district are extensively used by the general public and carry a heavy volume of pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
- 3. The streets within the district adjoin or pass through a civic area; and/or
- 4. The streets within the district are considered "arterial" or "major collector" roads as these terms are defined in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research General Plan Ordinance.

The Council made this determination in previous public hearings that the rationales apply to the properties along Old County Road and Masonic Way.

The undergrounding project will occur in three phases. During the first phase (installation of the substructure), PG&E will dig trenches in the street. They will then place the conduits (pipes) for the new electric, telephone, and cable TV services. The second phase will consists of each utility pulling wire through the underground conduits and installing ancillary equipment, such as transformers and switch boxes. After installation of the cables and other equipment, each utility will energize their facilities and begin "cutting over" individual properties from the overhead to underground service. Finally, once all the properties have been converted and are receiving their utilities underground, the overhead wires and the wooden utility poles will be removed (phase three).

PG&E has recently completed part of Phase One installing conduits on Old County Road south of Ralston Avenue. The installation of trenches along Old County Road north of Ralston Avenue will begin tentatively in around September 2010. The rest of the project (Phase 2 and 3) will begin in the second quarter of 2011 and be completed by early 2012. Property owners along Old County Road are obligated to provide service laterals (pipes) from the electrical, cable TV, and telephone terminals of their building to one foot beyond the building line on the property. Rule 20A Fund allows reimbursement to owners for installation of 100' of underground service laterals and up to \$1,500 for the conversion on electric service panels within the established underground district. Relocation costs exceeding these limits will be the property owner's obligation.

Discussion

PG&E completed a preliminary design and found that there would be undergrounding required outside Old County Road and Masonic Way based on the current district boundary map adopted. The estimated construction cost exceeds the \$6 million Rule 20A fund available to the City. This will also mean additional cost to the property owners for more electrical conversions and service laterals installation. After discussions with PG&E and the County, staff recommends the followings:

- Revise the district boundary map to include properties that will only be affected by the
 undergrounding along Old County Road and Masonic Way. The current district map
 includes properties with overhead utilities at the back of their properties that are not on
 Old County Road or Masonic Way. There are also a number of properties within the
 current district boundary that were already undergrounded as part of other development
 projects.
- 2. After discussions with the County of San Mateo, staff suggests revising the boundary to exclude the area south of Harbor Blvd. because of a County maintained shallow culvert that does not have enough flow capacity. Any undergrounding work in the area would be destroyed if a larger culvert is constructed by the County in the area.

- 3. There are two existing overhead high voltage power lines crossing the railroad track near Marine View Avenue and Mountain View Avenue which have an estimated cost of \$400,000 to underground. Since the speed train may go through this area and the undergrounding of these lines can be performed at the time, staff recommends the undergrounding of these two lines be excluded from this project.
- 4. Allow PG&E to perform the electrical panel conversions and installation of service laterals for all properties within the district. This will streamline the process and avoid delays to the project if some of the property owners cannot convert the system on time.

General Plan/Vision Statement

This project is consistent with the General Plan Public Facilities and Services Goals section (Paragraph 2041), which states "To provide public services at a level adequate to ensure public safety, health and welfare at the lowest possible cost; to establish and maintain all essential public services and facilities in a manner that ensures continued operation in time of emergency."

Fiscal Impact

The undergrounding project will be paid for by the Rule 20A fund. PG&E's estimate for the construction of the project is \$6,000,000 if the district boundary can be revised. No additional funding is required from the City.

Public Contact

Publication and posting of City Council agenda. Notices for the public hearing are mailed to all residents within the undergrounding utility district.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Council hold a public hearing to hear comments on the proposed boundary revisions. After consideration of these comments, staff recommends that the City Council determines that if it is the general public interest to amend the district boundary as shown in Exhibit A, attached and incorporated by reference to the resolution, to direct PG&E to use Belmont's Rule 20A funds to reconnect service in coordination with the County's underground project.

Alternatives

- 1. Refer to staff for more information.
- 2. Take no action.

Attachments

- 1. Resolution
- 2. Exhibit A Amended Utility Underground Map

Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert Yau, PE

Senior Civil Engineer

Carlos de Melo

Acting Public Works Director

Jonathan Gervais

Acting Public Works Director

Thomas Fil

Acting City Manager

Staff Contact:

Gilbert Yau, Senior Civil Engineer 650-595-7467 gyau@belmont.gov

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT AMENDING THE UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING DISTRICT BOUNDARY ON OLD COUNTY ROAD AND MASONIC WAY (RULE 20A UNDERGROUND UTILITIES CONVERSION)

WHEREAS, on April 8, 2003, the City Council established the Old County Road and Masonic Way Underground Utility District, Resolution No. 9389; and,

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2003, the City expanded the district to include 15 properties that front the section of Old County Road in the unincorporated area near Harbor Boulevard; and,

WHEREAS, the adopted district map includes properties with overhead utilities at the back of the properties that are not on Old County Road or Masonic Way; and,

WHEREAS, there are also a number of properties within the current district boundary that were already undergrounded with other development projects; and,

WHEREAS, the area south of Harbor Boulevard has a County maintained shallow culvert that does not have enough flow capacity; and,

WHEREAS, any undergrounding work in the area would be destroyed if a larger culvert is to be constructed by the County of San Mateo; and,

WHEREAS, there are two existing overhead high voltage power lines crossing the railroad tracks near Mountain View Avenue and Marin View Avenue which can be undergrounded at the time when the High Speed Rail is constructed; and,

WHEREAS, by allowing PG&E to perform the electrical panel conversion and service lateral installation for all properties, it will substantially streamline the process and avoid delays to the project if some of the property owners cannot convert the system on time; and,

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, May 25, 2010, at the hour of 7:30 p.m. at a regular meeting of the Belmont City Council, the City Council held a public hearing to hear the protests and receive evidence for and against the action herein proposed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont:

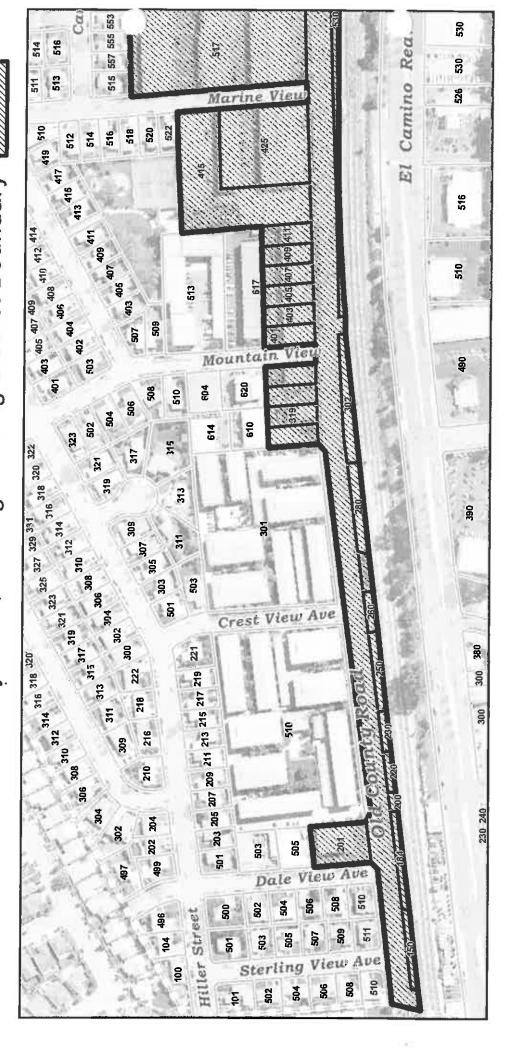
1. It is in the interest of the general public to amend the utility underground district map to exclude the two existing overhead high voltage power lines crossing the railroad tracks; exclude the area south of Harbor Avenue; and to include only properties that would be affected by the undergrounding on Old County Road and Masonic Way.

- 2. The Old County Road and Masonic Way Underground Utility District is hereby amended with the boundaries as shown on Exhibit A attached and incorporated by reference.
- 3. PG&E is directed to use City of Belmont's allocated Rule 20A funds to construct the project based on the amended district boundary.
- 4. PG&E is allowed to use the City of Belmont's allocated Rule 20A funds to convert the electrical panels and install service laterals for the properties with the district boundaries by their own forces or by their contractor.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on May 25, 2010.

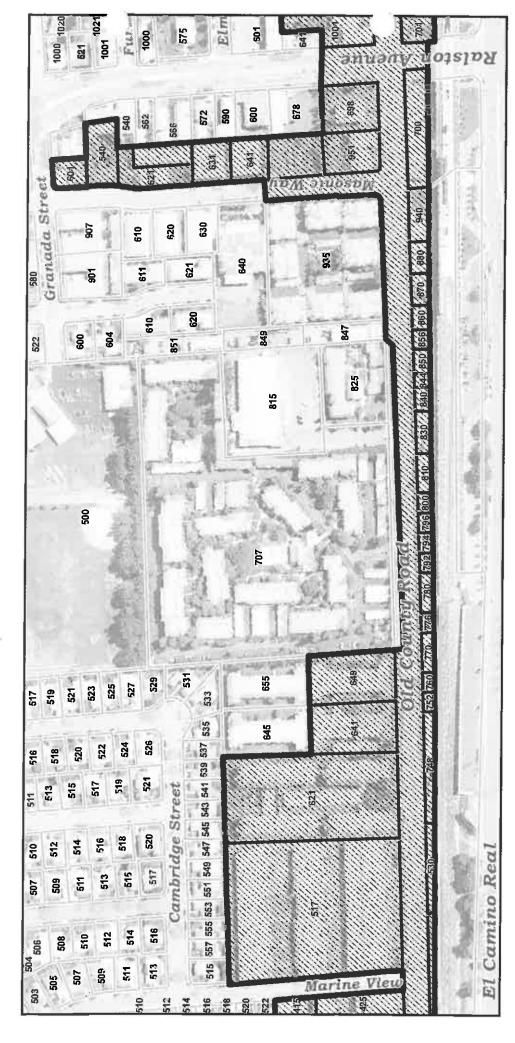
APPROVED:	City Clerk, City of Belmont
ABSTAIN, COUNCIL MEMBER(S):	
ABSENT, COUNCIL MEMBER(S):	
NOES, COUNCIL MEMBER(S):	
AYES, COUNCIL MEMBER(S):	

EXHIBIT A - Old County Road, Undergrounding District Boundary



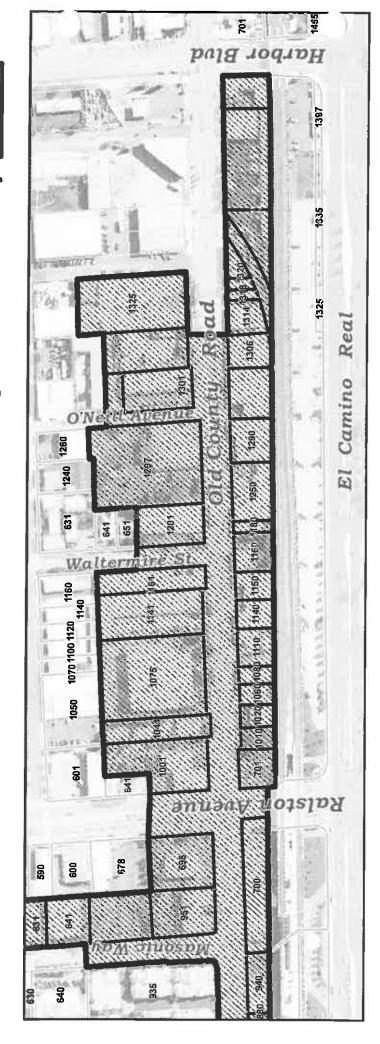
Section 1: San Mateo Boundary to Marine View Ave

EXHIBIT A - Old County Road, Undergrounding District Boundary



Section 2: Marine View Avenue to Ralston Avenue

EXHIBIT A - Old County Road, Undergrounding District Boundary



Section 3: Ralston Avenue to Harbor Boulevard